Your Frequently Asked Questions about the Courses Management Service

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Over the period of our engagement with you on the Courses Management Service, you've asked us further questions on the system and how it will work for you. We've captured these questions and the answer for you below:

COURSE PROPERTIES

Can courses with the same attributes/details but different lengths be added into the same course?
Courses with different lengths still have to be entered as two separate courses, because this affects the way your students are assessed. You do have the ability to use the 'copy course' function in the Courses Management Service so you can duplicate all the details without having to re-enter them and then just amend the duration to add additional years.

All courses will be pre-populated with the term dates of your last updated course.

Can courses be set up with placements in addition to our non-placement courses?
As you create a course we will ask you if one of the course attributes is that it runs with a placement year. The system will then ask you to identify which year of the course the students attend their placement.

If you have a course that runs with or without a placement year, as these will have different durations i.e. 3 or 4 years respectively, you will need to enter two separate courses. However you can use the 'copy course' function so you can duplicate all the details without having to re-enter them and then just amend the duration to add the additional year/s and the placement indicator.

Does the term placement year need to be ticked for both a year abroad and a year in a work placement?
The term placement refers to a period where a student studies or works away from their main provider. This is inclusive of both Study abroad and Work placement scenarios

For School Direct ITT providers, will 'unsalaried' be a course attribute or should it be added to the course name?
As students who are salaried and unsalaried can study on the same course for School Direct ITT programmes, this is not a course attribute but student specific so should not be held in the Courses Management Service.

We are working on adding this as an additional question to the student's application for 2015/16 academic year instead so that you do not need to capture this in the name of the course.

Does the system cater for NHS funding in one year but not another? For example Nursing courses are HEFCE fundable in the Foundation year, but NHS fundable for the remaining duration.
There is an NHS flag as a course attributes within the Courses Management Service and it will allow users to select which years this bursary is applicable within.

When users tick the foundation year indicator does this lengthen the course duration or should the foundation year be within the selected duration from the outset?
Duration should be the overall length of your course including your foundation year. When you indicate that there is a foundation year the first year will automatically become year 0. So for example a course with a four year duration, would become years 0 1 2 3.

For programmes where a foundation year is optional, should 2 versions of this programme (one with foundation year box ticked and one without) or just one version?

As the addition of a foundation year changes the duration of a course, this should be set up separately from a course that runs without. This is to ensure student support calculations are done correctly based on the course length.

SUBJECT CATEGORY (JACS)

FE Colleges providing HE and SCITTS do not use JACS codes, will there be guidance on what these are and how to correctly choose these for our courses?
We have a separate guidance document published on the HEP Services website which outlines the Subject Categories and how provides unfamiliar with this structure should identify the correct categories for their courses

What added value does the addition of Subject Categories/JACS bring?
We have been asked by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills to include Subject Categories based on JACS codes into our course information. The primary driver for this has been surrounding a new Part Time policy decision on exemptions for certain second degree courses.

What if the JACS code is different to the UCAS code?
JACS codes do not always match the UCAS code, so we would recommend that you search by course name or subject in the Subject Category field. This should allow you to identify the most appropriate category to chose.

Some courses have two JACS codes, has the database been designed to cater for this?
A single course can have up to 3 subject categories and the Courses Management Service will allow all to be entered against the course.

TERM DATES

When setting up courses with multiple term start dates does the system confirm each course with the first month of term dates so assessors can select the correct course?
Our assessing teams will be given more information when there are different variants of a course, such as term dates or location, to ensure that they can also make the right selection when processing an application or a change of circumstance.

Advice has been that the end date for the Term 3 should not include holiday/waiting for results time – What should HE Providers be entering if their 'official' end of term date would be some weeks after the last of the exams.
Term time can include time where students are undertaking exams, but not after these have been completed and no further active study is taking place. Please refer to the Term date guidance held within the Courses Management Service Guidance document

Will HE Providers be able to use 1.8.2015 as the term start date or will the system only allow 1.9.2015?
The system will allow for the 1.8.2015 to be used however it is preferred that 1.9.2015 is used.

MATCHING

How do you (or can you) map multiple existing programmes to one new programme?
The course matching process only applies to full time courses, part time courses do not require to be matched. You can only match one existing course with each course or course variant created for the 2015/16 AY. However if you are collating duplicate courses, previously run in 2014/15 AY, advice would be to select the course that had the most student applicants against it from the previous academic year.

Students will only be presented with one course to apply for in 2015/16 AY, so there will be no need to transfer applications, but the auto rollover of returning students applications which were non means tested will not be successful if the SLC course code is not matched. Students will instead be promoted to complete a returning application in full.

Can the 2015/16 AY course with a UCAS code be matched to a 14/15 course where a UCAS code was not previously entered?
The matching process which takes place after you add a course is done on the UCAS code, so if this is different in 2015/16 AY the system will not be able to automatically identify your course, but you will be able to select it from the dropdown, which will include a full list of your 2014/15 AY courses.

We do not have UCAS codes so how do we match?
If you do not have or use UCAS codes, the Courses Management Service will be unable to identify which of your courses in 2014/15 AY match your new entry. However we will provide an alphabetically ordered list of all your 2014/15 AY courses for you to choose from.

FUNCTIONALITY

Will there be a field within the Courses Management Service for HE Providers to enter their own course code or identifier?
There is a facility to add your own HEP code(s) against each course. You can enter up to 5 codes per course and a suggestion is that these can be used to group courses with similar properties. You can search on these HEP codes using the course search facility.

Will it be possible for providers to edit course information once a course has been created?
Certain fields can be edited once a course has been added to CMS. These include the course name, UCAS code, HEP code(s), the placement & intercalated attributes, course fee and term dates.

What changes can be made to a course after the launch of student applications?
Prior to the service launch providers had the ability to unmatch and remove courses if added incorrectly. Due to the complications of removing a course that has live student applications against it this facility was removed at the point of service launch. Certain fields can still be edited but courses cannot be unmatched and removed by providers after service launch.

Will it be possible to open and close courses?
It will be possible to close and reopen courses within the Courses Management Service and also to phase courses out i.e. close a course for new applications, but allow it to remain open for continuing students. So for example if you had a 3 year course which you were no longer accepting new students for in the 2015/16 AY you could make it only available for students in year 2 and 3.
Further details to follow on this in Spring 2015.

Can HE Providers have multiple users from the same institution inputting data at the same time?
As long as both users have separate login details and have the correct system roles then they will be able to enter course data simultaneously.

Currently Sandwich and Integrated Masters courses fail designation and can take 48 hours to be approved. How will these be dealt with in the new system?
Once you select ‘add course’ in the Courses Management Service, there is no delay, as no further validation is required by SLC. All our validation, business rules and designation checks are done at the point you enter your course so once successfully created SLC will not delay this becoming live for students to apply against

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QUALIFICATIONS

Which qualification should be used for Scottish Masters courses?
We have a qualification type created specifically on the Courses Management Service for Scottish Masters degrees.

Is there going to be a qualification category for QTS that is not PGCE
There are four qualifications with qualified teacher status available on the Courses Management Service:

- Bachelor degree with QTS
- Bachelor degree with honours with OTS
- Diploma in Education and Training
- Postgraduate ITT with QTS

How are HE Providers going to be able to differentiate between for eg a BA in Nursing (3 years) and a BSc in Nursing (3 years)?

You won't under the new qualification list have to differentiate, so unless the term dates alter between the two, all students can fall under the one course. If the term dates do alter, this would be an occasion, where the qualification would have to be added to the name.

How would HE Providers and students differentiated between courses that only differ by the level, e.g. Mathematics BSc and Mathematics MMath, if this additional information is not within the course name?
As the qualification is different for each course, the students will be able to distinguish between them as they make their application, rather than this being held in the Course name.

PART TIME

When adding Part Time courses, will providers be expected to enter nominal term dates in order to establish different intakes (seasonal starts)?
We do not request term dates for Part Time courses, just the month that the course begins within. Term dates will be applied by SLC in exactly the same way as the current system behind the scenes.

Are part time courses matched in the same way, but without a UCAS code?
Providers do not have to match part time courses like the full time course entry to CMS. Therefore all part time courses added in CMS for AY 15/16 have a new SLC course code.

Will the Courses Management Service deal with funding for Part-time courses in Scotland for Alternative Providers who currently have to apply separately to SAAS for course designation.
Alternative Providers should continue to apply for designation of their courses from the relevant devolved authority as per the current process. SLC will be notified of the outcome of your designation and will ensure that this is correctly referenced in your Provider details on the Courses Management Service.

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GENERAL

Will HE Providers have to add a generic DSA Postgraduate course to the Courses Management Service?
You will be asked to add a generic Postgraduate DSA course as in previous years just to ensure that we are able to process any postgraduate applications we receive from your students.

Can the old courses database still be accessed for previous academic years?
The old courses database will be available for up to 6 months after the launch of the Courses Management Service to allow you to make any changes to your course information for previous academic years.

If course designation has already been submitted to HEFCE for 2015/16, will this information be carried forward onto the new system?
SLC will be notified of the outcome of your designation application and will ensure that this is correctly referenced in your Provider details on the Courses Management Service.

Is there a user manual?
The Courses Management Service is designed with online help and guidance, so this can be available to you on screen, rather than you having to reference a separate document. However some of our key policy guidance around courses is available to assist further within the Courses Service Guidance document held on the HEP Services website.

Operational queries can also be directed via our HEP Helpline.

How will this service operate in future years? i.e. will programmes roll forward as before?
The main course details you enter for 2015/16 AY will not be required to be re-entered in forthcoming academic years, bar information around your fee and term dates, which are academic specific.

Will the option to export be available as it was in the old system?
Export functionality will be available, but it will not be ready for launch. This is planned for delivery in early 2015

What if a franchise partner is not listed, is there an option to add one?
If you can not find your franchise partner from the list provided, please contact us at hei_data@slc.co.uk

How will the new portal assist SFE find courses on the database instead of advising students that we have not uploaded them
We are working hard to ensure that students are presented with more information about their course at the point of application, so that they can link their application correctly first time

Will there be a replacement for course profiles as this allows a large number of courses to be validated at once
Development has not completed on the Courses Management Service and we will be adding to the functionality in the coming months. Thought will be given to how we make the input of term dates for future academic years as easy a process as possible for providers.

Can we remove duplicate entries without interrupting the continuity of a student's records?
We would strongly recommend that providers do remove any duplicate records from their course return. However we would ask you to choose to match the 2014/15 AY course that had the highest student volumes. The students on the non linked course will just choose the new course when they come to apply for 2015/16AY and this will not interrupt their customer journey.

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To assist you, your 2014/15 AY course information, including student volumes are available via the HEP Services team at HEP_services@slc.co.uk

As a SCITT provider I'm unsure of our domicile status. Is there a place I can easily find out this information?
If you are a public SCITT students from all domiciles will be able to apply for your programmes.

How will students be moved onto to the new courses, and when will this happen?
As students apply for their student finance support for the 2015/16 AY, they will pick the new course as entered in the Courses Management Service. If this has a variant, such as start month or location, the student will be asked targeted questions to allow the correct route to be identified.

Will students clearly see the qualification/start date/ location as they apply?
We are doing a lot of work to ensure students are given more information at the point at which they pick their course, to make it as easy as possible for them to select the correct course, including the qualification, location (if there is run a separate locations), start date (if there are multiple starts for the same course) and duration